

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY
CAMBRIDGE 39, MASSACHUSETTS

May 6, 1958

Professor Joshua Lederberg
Genetics Building
The University of Wisconsin
Madison 6, Wisconsin

Dear Josh:

In answer to your letter concerning people in biochemical genetics, I can only but agree with you that the problem is difficult. I am sure that all of the names I could suggest would be obvious to you, and you have already thought of them. It seems to me that Ernst Freese is one of the most promising people in this area. You have probably seen his work with Seymour Benzer on the distribution of mutations induced by bromo uracil. It seems to me that this is one of the most important papers on the question of the nature of the mutation process which has come out in a long time. Freese is now continuing on this problem at Harvard and has found that 2-amino purine is a mutagen and has a mutagenic spectrum which is different from both the spontaneous and the bromo uracil induced spectrum. He has recently been involved in the biochemistry of 2-amino purine and is handling the problem in what is an apparently extremely competent way.

As you probably know, Freese received his training as a physicist; and it has only been in the recent past that he has gotten involved in biochemistry. His contact with genetics at Cal Tech is considerably longer. However, he has obviously taken the problem of learning biochemistry very seriously and now considers it as his major problem to understand the chemical processes involved in mutations. Freese seems to be extremely competent. He is bright and is interested in many areas of biology. I can recommend him to you very highly.

I hope that we can get together some time in the near future. If there is any possibility of your being in the East, please let me


Professor Joshua Lederberg

2

May 6, 1958

know. Alan Garen and I seem to be in the position where we will be able to get some results on the question of genetic control of enzyme molecules in coli in the fairly near future.

Very sincerely yours,


Cyrus Levinthal

CL: gl